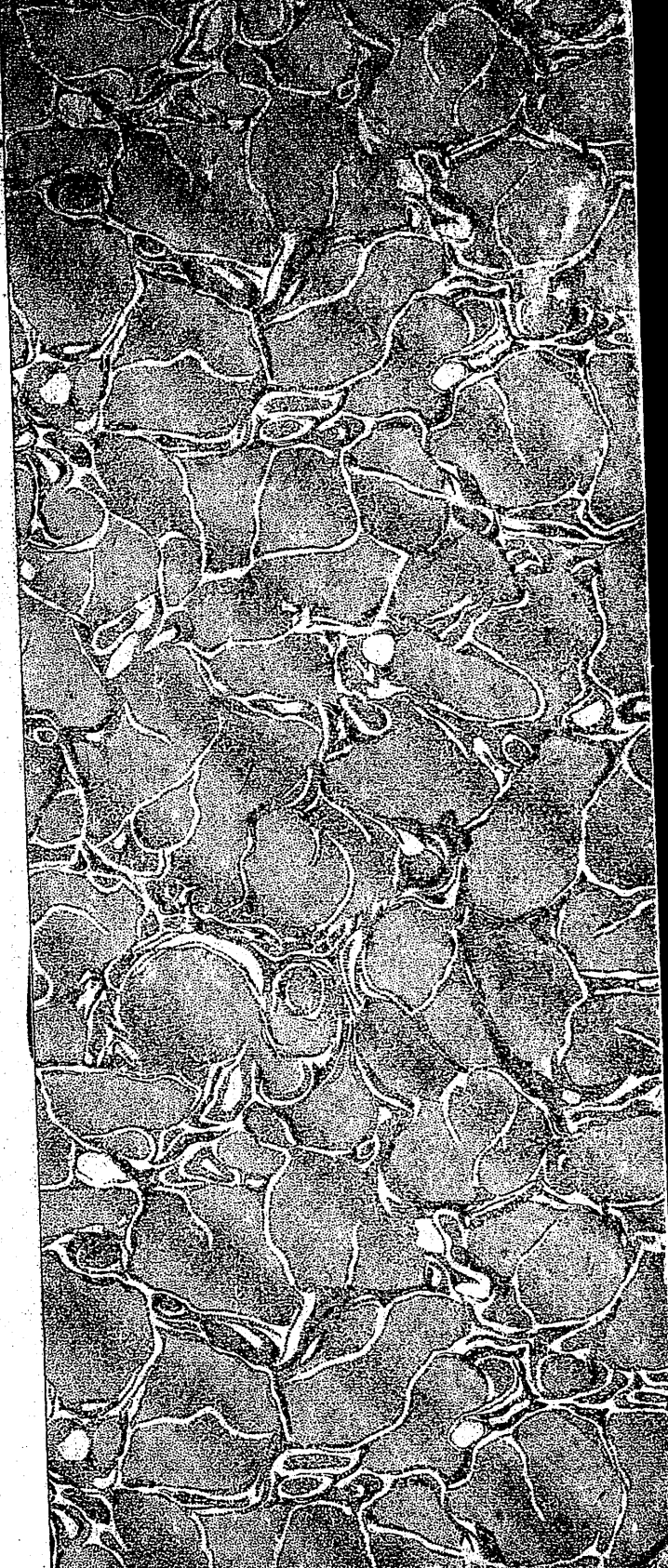


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PETER

NOT AN APOSTLE BUT A CHATTEL

WITH A STRANGE HISTORY.

BY REV. R. ABBEY,
Of Mississippi.

NASHVILLE, TENN.:
SOUTHERN METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE.
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X. Hays

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NOTE.

SOME statements in the following pages will be read with some surprise, and perhaps mortification. The introduction of Methodism into America was by two young Irish Wesleyan preachers simultaneously into New York, and a country neighborhood in Maryland, in 1760. Mr. Philip Embury was a carpenter, working at his trade, and settled in New York. Mr. Robert Strawbridge was a farmer, and settled in the woods on a little piece of land on Sam's Creek, sometimes called Pipe Creek, near Baltimore. It seems they neither of them came for the purpose of preaching, but with the intention of doing so as opportunity might present. The history of the Maryland Church seems for a number of years to be confined almost entirely to the personal ministry of Mr. Strawbridge at a few preaching-places in the country; while Mr. Embury, in a growing city of about thirty thousand people, where there were already several churches and considerable wealth, had quite a different history. Mr. Wesley, in England, directed his attention to this New York church, sending preachers to it as fast as he could spare them. The home augmentation was also rapid and considerable. The famous, eloquent, and zealous Capt. Webb, at an early period rallied to the assistance of Embury. Several merchants and other business men are at an early period found in this metropolitan church; and in 1768 the famous John street church was built at a cost of about four thousand dollars, or upward.

So that American Methodism, for ten or fifteen years, was virtually New York Methodism. The Church began to grow in Baltimore in a few years, receiving help occasionally from the New York preachers. New York was the home of American Methodism for nearly twenty years; and by some so considered, measurably, till the close of the last century, if not to the present time. So that a history of early Methodism in New York and the same in America is practically one and the same thing. The introduction and early days of American Methodism form an item of great interest, and many of its minutest details, in themselves almost or quite trivial, become valuable as they grow old.

Every writer of history is always perplexed and embarrassed for lack of consecutive details written at the time. Frequently he will search volumes and documents of later periods to find a date, or a name, or to fill a space. Indeed, all history is seriously defective or incomplete for the uniform lack of written details at the time. "O if these men had seen the necessity of it, and had written something more full and satisfactory about themselves!" is the universal lament of every man writing a history. Hence our historic difficulties. They are necessarily made up of outside scraps.

The case before us is most singularly unique in this respect. Here almost every thing was written down at the time. From about six or seven years after Mr. Embury landed in New York, in 1760, down to 1798 or 1799, a very careful record was kept by the church of all its doings, even to very minute details. A board of stewards, made up and kept up of the most intelligent and competent men, kept a complete record of every transaction, great and small, the receipt and disbursement of money to the last penny, the going and coming of the preachers and their horses, their living—every thing, almost literally every thing. It was not an ordinary steward's book, keeping the finances of the church, but a history of events kept by a continuous board of trustees in a careful and business-like way. These men wisely anticipated the historic necessities of coming generations, and provided for them in the most ample and satisfactory manner. But human hopes and expectations are often doomed to disappointment. If that historic register has been seen in the present century by more than one person, it is beyond my knowledge or information. It was in New York, in safe-keeping, I presume, about twenty-five years ago, but I have not heard of it since. Some history of this history is now in order.

R. ABBEY.

Yazoo City, Miss., March, 1885.

PETER NOT AN APOSTLE,

But a Chattel with a Strange History.

HISTORIC REVELMENTS OF EARLY NEW YORK METHODISM, AND THE GREAT DISRUPTIVE CONFERENCE OF 1844.

FEW ecclesiastical events have occurred since the days of Luther fraught with so much interest, either to the parties immediately concerned or to the Church of Christ generally, as the separation of the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church into two independent governments by the General Conference thereof held in the city of New York in May, 1844. The ostensible cause of this separation is too well known to need more than a mere mention. African slavery existed by law in the Southern States and not in those North. The Northern members of that General Conference declared, and reiterated in scores of speeches, declarations, and resolutions, that the Church was fundamentally, morally, religiously, and socially not only anti-slavery to the core, but aggressively and zealously so; that this had always been its character; that Mr. Wesley and all the early Methodists were notoriously and zealously anti-slavery; that the Church was anti-slavery in England, brought that stamp to America, and prized it as a cherished and vital characteristic. They declared that while the General Conference might not be able to reach the private membership in the South with this principle, or even the ministry, they could and would apply it to the episcopacy. Bishop Andrew's wife by a second marriage

was interested in slave property, and that tainted the entire Church with the most odious of all odors; that it was intolerable, and must be removed. They declared that the Church must be clear of this great sin, at least by all its official acts; and though sin might lurk in the membership, the official acts of the Church could be freed from all open iniquity.

The Southern members were largely in the minority in that General Conference. They pleaded that in the country where they lived and preached the civil law recognized and regulated slavery; that the Church had, and could have, no control over it. They said their business was with the gospel, and not with civil and political conditions; that they preached not to masters or the slaves as such, but to men in whatsoever condition they found them; that the slaves formed a large portion of their congregations; that many of them were religious through their preaching, and thousands more were not far from the gospel, and that for them to make war directly against slavery among the slaves would be at once to cut themselves off from all access to both masters and slaves, and so the mission of the gospel in that country is at an end. Moreover, the Southern members declared, and so read from the discipline of the Church and its history, that the law of the Church did not prohibit slave-owning in those States where slavery existed by law, and where mere manumission would not give the freedman liberty. These arguments were amplified and elaborated day after day and week after week. To all this the reply was, "Slavery is the sum of all villainies, and must cease in the Church;" and furthermore, "The Southern Church is a slave-trader and slave-breeder."

The result of those heated debates is but too well known. Since that time the two wings of the Church have existed under separate and independent governments. - The South-

ern Church has pursued its straightforward course. It has as much to do with slavery to-day as it ever had. Its ministers preach to all people, in all countries, without interfering with local laws—good ones or bad ones—or interfering with civil or political conditions. They declared that this is the course Christian ministers have always pursued in all times past, from prophets and apostles to this day.

In the narration of this essay it may be convenient for the reader that it be stated here, by way of reminder, that while Episcopal Methodism—that is, our Church in its episcopal form—dates in 1784, the Church dates back to 1739, and is seen only in England and spreading into Ireland and Scotland. In 1760—most of our histories call it 1766, but I think it was 1760—two Methodist preachers, with a few private members, emigrated to this country. One of the preachers—Philip Embury—with most of the little flock, settled in New York; while the other—Robert Strawbridge—with probably a smaller number, settled near Baltimore, Maryland. The Church in New York increased slowly for four years or so, mostly, or at least partly, from accessions from time to time from the old country. In 1766 it received considerable strength, both to the ministry and laity—to the former in the person of the celebrated powerful and zealous Captain Thomas Webb, a British officer. Mr. Embury, with this assistance, was soon enabled to have a preaching-room “near the barracks,” after preaching some time in his own house; and then in no long time they hired the celebrated “Rigging Loft,” quite a spacious if not a very elegant room. Here they preached to large congregations, and the little Church increased rapidly. New York at that time contained something under thirty thousand people, and was fast getting to be a place of considerable commerce. Several of the Methodists were merchants of high standing and considerable business. In 1767, or

perhaps in the latter part of 1766, they began to feel more and more the need of a church to preach in—the Rigging Loft was becoming too strait; and they set themselves to work to build a house for the Lord. About this time other preachers came over from England, sent by Mr. Wesley—viz., Robert Williams, Joseph Pilmoor, and Francis Asbury, and others soon after; and the Church grew and strengthened.

As early as the 29th day of March, 1768—and how much earlier I do not know—those Methodists had an organized board of trustees, consisting of “Philip Embury, William Lupton, Charles White, Richard Sause, Henry Newton, Paul Hick, and Thomas Taylor, all of the city of New York; and Thomas Webb, of Queens county.” This board, with occasional changes of one man out and another in, was kept in perpetual being until 1799, and how much longer I do not know—to the present day, I suppose. They were evidently men of business, and kept the completest church-record I ever knew or heard of. In this book they recorded every thing, great and small, pertaining to the Methodist Church in New York. The nicety and particularity of this register and history of this Church are most remarkable. Every preacher—when he came, when he preached; every item of expense—horse-feed, postage, so much for paper for the preacher, quarterage, etc.; all these facts are minutely given. Let me put down just a few of these items out of hundreds all over the book: “20th Sep., 1769. To cash paid Mr. Jarvis for hat for Mr. Williams, £2. 5. 0. Sep. 22. To cash for a book for Mr. Williams, £0. 0. 9. Oct. 9. To cash paid Mr. Newton for three pair of stockings for Mr. Williams and Mr. Embury, £1. 11. 9. To cash paid for a trunk for Mr. Williams, £0. 12. 6.”

It is not needful to pursue these items. It is enough here to say that this book contained not only every item of

money received and paid out for nearly, if not, quite, forty years, but almost every thing else pertaining to the New York Church; so that it was a complete itemized history of New York Methodism in that time. It must have been a large, well-bound book, like a counting-house journal of several hundred pages. All of Methodism in New York was John Street Church until 1789, when a second church was begun. It was got ready for use in 1790 or 1791.

This record-book contained not only a complete history of Methodism in New York from the first down to 1799, but it was the only existing history. All other history, with one exception which I will mention, is made up outside of it. Now this important book was "lost!" Not lost, either, but mislaid, or—call it what you will—it went suddenly out of sight, and remained so for almost sixty years. Dr. Bangs, in 1857, or previously, was surprised to learn that such a book ever existed. It would have corrected quite a number of important errors in his history. For instance, it is generally believed that John Street Church was closed, and occupied by the British army during the war. This is a mistake. Dr. Bangs said he was told so; others wrote it that way, and so he wrote it that way. But this register shows it was open and used by the Methodists all the while during the war. A number of other things, some of them not very important perhaps, are erroneously stated in the published histories.

Now read carefully, for I write carefully. It is easily seen that no complete and satisfactory history of the New York Church can ever be written without this register. The important thought was no doubt carefully preserved by these trustees that all future generations would be dependent on their entries for the groundwork of all future history of their time. So they carefully furnished abundant material of every kind. While people are making

history they are generally very careless about preserving it; but those gentlemen seem to have been well aware of the importance in future time of a correct account of the first steps and stages of Methodism in the New World—so they determined, and for forty years persevered in the laborious determination, to furnish the future historians every needed assistance. Their work was well done, and was as important as it was faithful and laborious.

But alas for human hopes and expectations! That book, with all its treasures, is, as I presume, now in the city of New York. It seems to have been there only twenty-five years ago; and if since 1799 it has been seen by more than one man, I have no knowledge of it. Why this mysterious darkness where there ought to be the clearest light is a question not likely to be fully answered to the satisfaction of all in this little essay, though some gleams of light may be thrown upon it. It is at least strange, and requires explanation, that a complete historic register of New York Methodism for forty years was made by the Church and for the Church, and left in the Church, and since eighty-five years ago has been seen by one man, and one only.

The reader is by this time beginning to inquire how I come to know so much about this lost book. Well, I will tell you. In 1858 I was in New York, and on a certain occasion was in the Methodist Book-room, at 200 Mulberry street, in company with Dr. Porter, one of the Agents. A man from the bindery came into the office with a few new books on his arm, and laid them on the table where we were sitting. Dr. Porter handed me one, saying, "Here is a new book we are just getting out." It was a handsome, muslin-bound, large 12mo of 594 pages, with a number of cuts, engravings, etc.—labeled on the back, "Lost Chapters Recovered from the Early History of American Methodism. Rev. J. B. Wakeley." Lower down is the

seal of "Methodist Episcopal Church, New York;" and at the bottom, "Carlton & Porter, New York." Facing the title-page is a very handsome steel-engraving of the author, with fac-simile of signature, showing a face and forehead of unusual intellect. The title-page is as follows: "Lost Chapters Recovered from the Early History of American Methodism, by Rev. J. B. Wakeley. For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers; shall they not teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?—*Holy Writ*. There were Gyants in the earth in those days, mightie men which were of olde, men of renowne.—*Ibid*. (Seal.) Corporate seal of the M. E. Church in New York. New York: Published for the author by Carlton & Porter, 200 Mulberry street. 1858." The next page contains the copyright, "Entered according to act of Congress," etc.; and the next contains the dedication, "To the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church," etc. Then follows the Preface, which I have thought best to insert in full, as it will give a clear outline of the character of the book. Extracts might not be satisfactory:

"PREFACE.

"When on a visit to Sunnyside not long ago, my friend Washington Irving said to me, in speaking of the 'Life of Washington' that had just been published, 'I feel, now the volumes are issued, as if I was just prepared, with a knowledge of all the facts that are in my possession, to commence writing the life of Washington.' I may say, without having the vanity to place myself by the side of this distinguished writer, whose modesty is equal to his talents, that I feel the same in regard to the work that is now placed before the reader. The truth is, when pursuing my studies in another direction, unexpectedly, rich and rare materials were thrown into my hands that shed a flood of

light on early Methodism in America. Then I came to the conclusion that I ought to write a book on this subject, and have done so.

"A singular old book, that for many years was lost, has recently been found. It contains the earliest authentic records of Methodism in this country. It is a perfect treasure. It is most valuable to the antiquarian, to the historian, and especially to the great Methodist family. It has a *denominational interest*.

"The old book is redolent of the virgin soil of Methodism in America, and responds in life-like naturalness—the very 'age and body' of long, long time ago. It introduces to us the carpenter-preacher, Philip Embury; the soldier-preacher, Captain Webb; to Boardman, and Pilmoor, and the early trustees; and their lifeless forms seem to be reanimated, and we see them living, breathing, speaking, and acting as they were nearly a century ago. We behold them laying the foundation of the temple of Methodism in this New World, on which has been erected a noble superstructure.

"What associations cluster around the cradle of Methodism in America! Old John Street Methodist Church is a hallowed place. It is embalmed in the memories and affections of thousands. There is a beauty and a charm about it that age and time cannot annihilate. It bears the same relation to American Methodism that Plymouth Rock, Faneuil Hall, and Independence Hall do to the country. There is but one Plymouth Rock, though there are many rocks in the country; there is but one Faneuil Hall, the cradle of liberty, though there are many halls in the land; there is but one John Street Methodist Church, though there are many Methodist houses of worship in America. We venerate John Street Church as the *mother of us all*, the mother of numerous and thrifty children.

"The old book sheds light upon that part of our history

where all before was dark as a starless night. It is the first record of the trustees and stewards of the old John Street Church. It is a model book, both on account of its neatness and exactness. They were very particular, in those days, to record every thing, small and great. What a reproof of the careless manner in which many church-records are kept now!

"The old book is the *basis* of the work entitled 'Lost Chapters Recovered.' We do not publish all that it contains, but make extracts, from year to year, from the first to the conclusion.

"This work is something more than a mere *local* history. It describes the early and great men of Methodism, in whom the great Methodist family have a common interest. To make chapters as complete as possible, I have not only followed the old book, but availed myself of other material that enriches the volume.

"Does the reader inquire where this old book has been? I answer, I cannot tell; only it has been lost for over half a century, and very recently recovered. The oldest ministers now in New York, and the oldest trustees, never heard of the book. *It is ninety years old.* It contains chapters of our early history that are entirely new to the present generation. It extends from 1768 to 1797.

"We read of the 'lost chronicles of the kings of Israel and Judah,' also the 'lost chapters of Livy.' Unfortunately they have never been recovered. 'What a treasure of history if they could be found! But we are more fortunate with some of the lost chapters in the early history of Methodism. The title of this work is not poetic, romantic, or imaginary, but sober truth.' Were they not lost chapters? Have they not been recovered?

"This old book has been found at a period when great attention is being given, not only in different States of the

Union, but in various ecclesiastical bodies, to gather reminiscences of the past—therefore the formation of so many State and Church historical societies. While our sister Churches are so busy, shall we be behind them in a work so commendable? They rejoice when some one fact or incident is rescued from oblivion. Ought there not to be greater joy among the Methodists when a whole volume is discovered that gives light on our early history?

“The ‘Lost Chapters’ will be valuable as *material* for the future historian. I have secured that which I believe deserves a *permanent record*. If nothing more, it will be used for future reference. I have rescued from oblivion many a name in the ministry and laity that had been forgotten, and recovered chapters that had been long lost, and soon would have been irrecoverable. How little we know of the first trustees of John Street Church! Even the names of all of them were unknown to us.

“The reader will no doubt be pleased to see a fac-simile of the signatures of the ministers and trustees of old John Street. The year connected with their names sometimes means the date of the signature—for instance, Mr. Wesley’s and Dr. Coke’s. Their fac-similes were taken from letters of that date written to the pastor of Wesley Chapel. The other signatures of names mean the first time the writers were stationed in old John Street.

“Some may dislike the minuteness of detail into which the writer has gone. Let them remember that as our globe is made up of grains of sand, and as drops of water form the ocean, so history is made up of facts and incidents small in themselves, which when blended together make the historical record.

“I am under obligations to many for kindness rendered; but as I have made particular acknowledgment in the work, it will be unnecessary to repeat it here. It is with

unaffected diffidence that this volume is now submitted to the public, not concerning the *facts* recorded but the *manner* in which the work has been performed. It must stand or fall upon its merits or demerits. The writer is too deeply conscious of its defects to expect credit for all the labor it has cost him; and yet he has the consolation to know he has done the very best he could. He is aware that the deep interest and great value of the subject demand a more able and practiced pen, but derives encouragement from the reflection that the present work, while it provokes no comparison with others, will fill a void in our ecclesiastical history hitherto unoccupied. If any criticise it, I can find no fault with them, for it is public property; only let it be *manly* criticism.

"A quarter of a century ago this day I was licensed to preach the glorious gospel of the blessed God. It is worthy of note that on this anniversary I finish the volume entitled 'Lost Chapters from the Early History of American Methodism.' I trust it will be read when I have finished my course and been gathered to my fathers.

J. B. WAKELEY."

"New York, January 6, 1858."

Alas for human hopes and expectations! Nothing, as I presume and believe, was ever more honorably or more faithfully written than that preface and the sixty-two chapters which follow. I do not know Dr. Wakeley personally, but understand him to be a prominent New York Methodist preacher. I see him in the New York Book Concern catalogue as author of several books, but *not of* "Lost Chapters." Why? Read on, and you shall see. His "Lost Chapters" seem not to have made any large or valuable additions to Southern literature touching the early history of Methodism in America. The book contains internal evidence of honest, faithful compilation, and a manly, conscientious

regard for the *truth of history*. Some things in it, to be herein looked at after awhile, the author's feelings would no doubt prompt him to ignore, or, as he says, suppress; but as an honest man and faithful writer and compiler of important public history not his own private property, he could not, did not, do it. Wakeley's book contained such matter from the old record as he considered important and useful for his book. How much more it contains that might be considered important for other books is one of the things we should like to know.

Let us look a minute or two at Dr. Wakeley's "Lost Chapters," and then go back "more than fifty years" and examine the old record a little. No one can fail to see that Wakeley's book was far more important and reliable than any other—nay, than all other books could be as touching the early history of American, or rather New York, Methodism. Dr. Bangs and other writers on this subject picked up their facts here and there—a scrap in a place—the best they could; various private notes and note-books, and personal journals of individual travel; a letter here and a hearsay there; a printed sermon and a newspaper paragraph in another place—not always in agreement with each other. This is the only data they had or could have. But Wakeley, in addition to all these ordinary sources of information, had a regular official journal, kept by competent men, in which were daily and weekly entries of every thing noteworthy, important and unimportant, touching the history and transactions of John Street Church from the first down to December, 1797. It was all there—a full record.

One of the most valuable things among men is their history of the past, and especially Church history. Where are we without it? We had a good history—the very best that could be—of the introduction and course of Methodism

in New York and that region for about forty years, down to nearly, or quite, the close of the last century; but I presume we have it no more in any popular or accessible form. It may be in existence; but if so, it is in the custody of somebody not known to me. The old written journal, forty years from date to date, was in existence December, 1797, after which time—I do not know how long after—it got lost. How is this? A valuable record might get lost. It might get burned to ashes or sunk in the sea. But this was not lost, it was mislaid only; for it came to light after more than fifty years. It might have been in some way accidentally mislaid; but if so, in this case it was purposely put there or kept there. If honestly mislaid, then its sudden disappearance must have been known to the men then and there. It was a rare and highly valuable book—a complete record of Methodism for forty years then last past. It was the property of the Church of Christendom, of posterity. It was of sacred value. It was the sole embodiment of a large and most interesting scope of historic truth. These trustees were merely its *trustees*. It was not theirs. It was their official and religious duty to preserve it carefully. Its great value was well known. And it got mislaid, and could not be found! Then where is the public lament? Where is the record of the loss? That is a historic fact that could not be lost. The loss was certainly a known historic fact. A man might lose his pocket-knife, and the fact might not be so generally known as to become historic; but the loss of such a valuable historic record as that book could not but be known and lamented; and the concealment of that fact is evidence of collusion in the premises.

The secret of the “loss” of this long and valuable history is to be successfully looked for, as it would seem, in another direction. About that time, and ten or twelve years before, the moral aspects of the slave-trade and negro slavery be-

gan to be inquired into in England. Wilberforce, Pitt, Sharp, Clarkson, and some others, began to stir the matter of the slave-trade in Parliament; an anti-slave-trade society was formed in England. The British Wesleyans were feeling of the subject. The New York Methodist Church was pro-slavery. Its official acts and official profits in slave-dealing stood forth in relief on the broad pages of this record-history. Now what? If the New York members of the General Conference of 1844 who proclaimed so roundly and so eloquently about "the sum of all villainies," and "slavery under all circumstances," did not know that their official expenses were paid in part by slave-money—that is, money arising from ecclesiastical slave-dealing and slave-owning and slave-labor—it is because they were not as well informed about their own condition and surroundings as ministers of the gospel sometimes are.

It is too well known to need rehearsal that the sum and drift of the debates in the General Conference of 1844, which resulted in the division of the government of the Church, was on this wise: The Northern members insisted that slavery—in all and any conditions and circumstances, for all and any reasons, with all and any excuses—was the highest of all possible crimes; that, being the sum of all villainies, it was folly and delusion to talk of mitigating circumstances, for there were and could be none; that these were primary principles that had governed Methodism from the first, and must govern it in the future; that a Methodist church could not afford to touch slavery in any form with the end of its little finger, for that such contamination would taint the entire Church; that this crime had always been held by the Church as an unmitigable abomination utterly beyond the pale of toleration.

Now let us see with what wisdom, with what historic fidelity, with what candor, brotherly kindness, or charity, these

averments were made. This work shall be both short and conclusive. They themselves, not we of the South, shall tell the story. No Southern testimony is admissible here. As writer of this little essay, I have nothing to say in this matter. My office is discharged when I show what *they* say about it. New York Methodists, and they alone, without interruption, shall begin, continue, and close this testimony.

So we open *their* book, containing *their* record of *their* doings—"Lost Chapters"—under the official seal of the New York Methodist Book Concern, at page 438. Facing this page we have a pretty good steel-engraving of a good-looking negro, apparently in about mid-life, slightly tinged with gray. You would likely put his age between fifty and sixty. On the plate he is named Peter Williams. Elsewhere in the book—for he is spoken of in perhaps fifty places—he is called Peter. Peter was a slave owned by a man by the name of Aymar, a tobacconist of New York, and in the time of the war an open and well-known loyalist. Peter was occasionally, and even frequently, hired for sexton to John Street Church. This appears from frequent entries copied by Dr. Wakeley from the old record.

On page 295, where it seems to come in in more historic order, I quote as follows from Wakeley:

"There are other singular entries this year in the old volume. '1783. June 10.—Paid Mr. Aymar for his negro Peter, £40. 00. 0. We will have the sequel to this by and by.'"

On page 440 we read:

"Peter Williams was born in the city of New York. Some have supposed he was called Williams after Rev. Robert Williams, who preached in John Street before Richard Boardman arrived; but this is a mistake. Peter's parents were named Williams. His father's name was George; his mother's, Diana. They were jet black—both slaves

brought from Africa. As Paul was a 'Hebrew of the Hebrews,' so Peter was an African of the Africans, no impure mixed blood flowing in his veins. He was a genuine African."

From page 440 to page 459 frequent mention is made of Peter, his wife, his religious character, and how faithfully they both served in the parsonage, etc. Chapter Fifty commences on page 460, and opens in this wise:

"We have already seen that Peter was a descendant of Ham, and was a slave to a tobacconist by the name of Aymar. His master was a loyalist whose sympathies were altogether with the mother-country, and who had none for those who were struggling for freedom. When peace was restored he was obliged to leave the country, as well as many others; and the trustees of the Methodist preaching-house in John street purchased Peter from him. They purchased him while the society was in connection with the Rev. John Wesley, and before the Methodist Episcopal Church in America was organized. It may be supposed that there is some mistake about this, but there is none. We have the dates and documents. We find this singular record in the old book: '1783. June 10.—Paid Mr. Aymar for his negro Peter, £40. 00. 0.' Thus we see they purchased a slave. This was about the time Samuel Spraggs left New York and the Rev. John Dickins came to this city."

On page 463 we read as follows:

"PETER WILLIAMS'S EMANCIPATION PAPER.

"The following interesting historical document I found in the possession of his adopted daughter. The reader will peruse it with no ordinary interest:

"To all to whom these presents shall come or may concern. Whereas by a bill of sale made by James Aymar, of the city of New York, tobacconist, and duly executed by him

on the tenth day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-three, he, the said James Aymar, did, for and in consideration of the sum of forty pounds, current money of the province of New York, to him in hand paid at and before the ensealing and delivery of the said bill of sale by the trustees of the Methodist meeting in the city of New York, fully, clearly, and absolutely grant, bargain, sell, and release unto the said trustees his negro man named Peter; to have and to hold the said negro man unto the said trustees and their assigns forever. Now know ye that we, John Staples, Abraham Russell, Henry Newton, John Sproson, and William Cooper, trustees for the time being of the said Methodist meeting, for and in consideration of services rendered and payments in money made to our predecessors, trustees of the said Methodist meeting, amounting in value to forty pounds, have manumitted, liberated, and set free, and by these presents do manumit, liberate, and set free, the said negro man named Peter—now called Peter Williams—hereby granting unto him, the said Peter Williams, all such sum or sums of money and property, of what nature or kind soever, which he, the said Peter Williams, may by his industry have acquired, or which he may have purchased since the eighteenth day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-five; and we do also give and grant unto him, the said Peter Williams, full power and lawful authority to sue for and recover, in his own name and to his own use, all such sum or sums of money and other property acquired as aforesaid which is now due or which may hereafter become due, or which of right belongs to him by such purchase since the said eighteenth day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-five. In testimony whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and affixed our seals this twentieth

day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-six.

"JOHN STAPLES (L.S.), ABRAHAM RUSSELL (L.S.),

"HENRY NEWTON (L.S.), WILLIAM COOPER (L.S.),

"JOHN SPROSON (L.S.).

"Sealed and delivered in presence of

"N. B.—The words 'his negro man,' named in the ninth line from the top, being previously written on an erasure; also the word 'Methodist,' in the twelfth line.

"NICKOLAS BAYARD, JACOB TABULE.

"STATE OF NEW YORK, SS.

"Be it remembered that on the twentieth day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-six, personally came before me, James Kent, one of the masters in chancery for said State, the within named John Staples, Abraham Russell, Henry Newton, John Sproson, and William Cooper, and each of them acknowledged that he had signed, sealed, and delivered the within instrument of writing as his voluntary act and deed for the purposes therein mentioned. And I, having carefully examined the same, and finding no material erasures or interlineations (except those taken notice of before the sealing and delivery thereof), do allow the same to be recorded. JAMES KENT.

"Recorded in the office of the clerk of the city and county of New York in Lib. No. 53 of Conveyances, etc., page 220, this 16th day of January, 1797. Examined by Robert Benson, Clerk."

We are now on page 466, and in order to throw the fullest light on the subject, I will continue to quote two or three pages following right on from Mr. Benson's certificate, and will then bring forward some other highly important facts from the record which may need some explanation. Dr. Wakeley says:

"This is a singular historical chapter; it had been lost,

but is now recovered. Who at the present day knew that the first Methodist society in New York *bought* their sexton? that they owned a *slave*? Yet the strange truth has come to light; this singular fact is too plain to be denied; the evidence is overwhelming.

"*Peter Williams* was their slave—they owned him as much as any slave was ever owned in America. He was deeded to them 'to have and to hold the said negro man, and to their assigns forever.' Peter was their *property*, and the *deed* was on record. They paid *cash* for him—*forty pounds*—to his former master.

"Peter was not their slave for a day or two, while they could execute his emancipation papers, but for thirteen years; or from the 10th of June, 1783, to the 20th of October, 1796. This is the statement in his emancipation paper. On the subject of slavery I do not propose to enter, but simply to state the facts in the case and draw a few natural inferences. We have seen that the trustees of John Street Preaching-house purchased a slave and paid the money for him. Every reflecting mind will naturally ask this question, Why did they do it?

"*First.* It was probably to prevent others from buying him. Peter was in the market—his master *must* leave the country, and his slave *must* be sold. They did not know but he might fall into the hands of a hard master.

"*Secondly.* They purchased him to ultimately set him free, as the sequel of his history proves, and not to continue him in bondage. They thought it not only an act of kindness, but also of justice toward their faithful sexton. They undoubtedly considered it not only an act of philanthropy but religion. They did it conscientiously, religiously. But all this does not do away the fact that the trustees of Wesley Chapel bought and paid for their sexton, that he was their slave, bought with the society's money. Nothing can change,

or alter, or remove these stubborn facts. They stand out in bold relief. The trustees of John Street Preaching-house purchased, paid for, and held a slave.

“*Thirdly*. I think the trustees bought Peter at his own request and at the request of the *Methodist Society*. The reason I think Peter did so is this: On the old book, the 26th of May, 1783, Peter is credited thus: A watch received from sexton, £5. Men do not generally wish to part with their *watches*. A sexton needs one as much as a minister. On the 10th of June, fifteen days after, they bought Peter of his master. It will be seen the watch was credited as part payment for the forty pounds they paid Mr. Aymar for his slave. It would appear as if Peter urged them to buy him, and said: ‘I can soon pay for myself; and there is my watch; credit me with that as part payment.’ Peter never owned but one watch, and he either bought it back from the trustees or they presented it to him. He kept it while he lived and left it to his adopted daughter, who still preserves it. I looked at the old watch of the old sexton, and thought, What a history you could relate if endowed with intelligence! His adopted daughter said to me, ‘Father thought all the world of his watch.’ That the Methodist Society requested the trustees to purchase Peter I infer from the following on the old book:

1783, Dec. 7. Cash by Peter Williams, in part for
his debt to the *Society*, £4. 0. 0.

His debt, not to the trustees, but to the ‘*Society*,’ as if they had said: Purchase Peter, and we will assume the debt. If Peter is unable to pay it, we will see the money refunded.

“Peter’s emancipation paper informs us that he had paid for himself by the 18th of November, 1785. So, ‘all the money and property of what nature or kind soever he might have acquired or purchased since that date were granted to

him in his own name and for his own use.' The trustees did not purchase Peter to speculate or to make money; they bought him for forty pounds, and then sold him to himself for the same amount. They liberated him 'for and in consideration of services rendered and payments in money made' to their 'predecessors, trustees of the Methodist meeting.'

"It is somewhat strange the trustees should not have emancipated Peter until thirteen years had passed away, when he had paid for himself in two years. We can account for it only in this way, that as Peter had paid for himself, and the fact so stated on the trustees' book, they thought it was sufficiently understood that he was his own free man, and they carelessly deferred giving him his emancipation paper. Peter preserved it during his life-time as if more valuable to him than gold or diamonds; and it is carefully preserved by his descendants still as a most precious relic, showing that though their venerated friend was once a slave *he lived and died his own* FREE MAN.

"It is very evident from the emancipation paper that the trustees of John Street considered the old colored sexton A MAN, though his face was black and his hair curled; though he was an African and had been a slave. A man! a capable man! a responsible man! Therefore they granted him the '*property and money* he might have accumulated' since a certain date, and they give him 'full power and lawful authority to sue and recover in his own name,' etc. Peter Williams showed himself a man in every sense of the word, physically, mentally, morally.

"The reader may wish to know who the trustees were that bought Peter Williams of his master in 1783. William Lupton, the 'old trustee'—the fellow-soldier of Captain Webb, who fought side by side with him, first the battles of his country, then the battles of the Lord—Richard Sause,

and Charles White. These three brethren that I have named held the office of trustee of John Street Preaching-house from the first, and were reappointed by Richard Boardman when he arrived in this country in 1769. John Staples and Stephen Sands belonged to the second board. All whom we have named were among the original subscribers for Wesley Chapel. John Mann was not only a trustee but a very useful local preacher. Philip Marchington was also a trustee at that time. Their characters I have described in the former part of this volume. It will be seen that they were good and true men. These are the men who bought Peter Williams and paid the society's money for him. The reader has now all the facts and circumstances of this peculiar case before him, and can judge whether there was any thing in the whole transaction to condemn, or if all was not alike honorable to the trustees and to their honest, faithful colored sexton, Peter Williams."

Thus we have listened attentively and patiently to the New York preacher's own account of their speculations in the enterprise of slave-dealing, in their own words carefully transcribed, together with their inferences from and explanations of the same. The next chapter treats of Peter's death and burial, and that of his wife Molly. They both lived to ripe years, and died respected and lamented. Molly had one son, and they adopted a girl-child who survived them many years. Dr. Wakeley saw and conversed with her several times in 1857, when he was visiting his "Lost Chapters," as he tells us.

Some of Dr. Wakeley's inferences are too far-fetched; so much so as to be improbable. We must go by the old record-book, and make such inferences only as seem to be necessary. Many things might be so of which we have no knowledge.

There is in the book no statement, or agreement, or un-

derstanding by the trustees, of any promise to Peter that he was ever to be set at liberty. Soon after the purchase, Peter began to scrape up small sums of money, which from time to time he paid to, or deposited with, the trustees, until before the end of the third year he had in fact refunded to them the full amount of money they paid for him, if the trustees chose so to consider it. But as they declined to liberate him, the inference must be that they did not so consider those payments.

Peter was a tobacconist, and therefore had opportunity to gather up small sums of money by working at late hours, etc. This was always the case more or less with all slaves, especially those in towns and cities. There can be no doubt from these records that Peter had hopes from the first of obtaining his freedom by paying the full value for it; and no doubt he was encouraged in those hopes by friends. But the trustees never said so; and considering the care and minuteness with which they recorded every thing, we are obliged to infer that such an understanding would have been written for the guidance of their successors. The *personnel* of the board was changing from time to time.

More than ten years after the last of the forty pounds of money was refunded, Peter all the while failing to get his liberation, in the year 1796 we find an entirely new board of trustees with the exception of one man—viz., John Staples. And with this new board, after more than ten years' failure, we find Peter successful in getting "his emancipation paper." Strange emancipation! It was just as much of an *emancipation*, or *manumission*, as was always given by a slave-owner on selling his slave. Manumission and *quid pro quo* are not quite one and the same thing in my table of terminology. I insist that a *bill of sale* ought to be called a bill of sale. If "Peter preserved it [this emancipation document] during his life-time, as if more valuable to him

than gold or diamonds," then the delay of writing it for more than ten years was not "carelessly deferred."

I am trying to vindicate the truth of history, and so go by the book. The record is that this New York Church held Peter in slavery more than thirteen years; and there is not in the book an intimation, nor an *inference* by the honest Dr. Wakeley, that in that period there was respite, cessation, or relaxation from daily and hourly labor in the service of that society. In this period—I suppose all of it—he served as sexton and undertaker, and if they ever paid him a shilling for any of this labor, there is no record of it nor hint looking that way. The duties of sexton and undertaker would occupy a part of his time; about what they employed him the rest of the time, Wakeley's account of the journal does not state. Some other entries in the book of payments to other sextons indicate that the value of that service was about a hundred dollars a year. So the Church realized about thirteen hundred dollars profit on the purchase of Peter, counting his service as sexton. His other time was worth something. Two thousand dollars would probably be a fair estimate of the entire profit.

I have now to bring forward a matter in this slave-dealing of far greater gravity than any thing heretofore specifically stated. This New York Methodist Church—that is, the trustees for it—not only "bought" Peter, *they enslaved him*. Now, hold still, and read on. Do n't be in a hurry. In strict legal technicality it could not be said that they *enslaved* Peter, for he was legally a slave on the 10th day of June, 1783, when they bought him. This purchase perpetuated his slavery, or continued it, unnecessarily. If those trustees had let him alone and declined to interfere with him, he would in a short time have been free—virtually free—for there would have been nobody to claim or hold the property Aymar had in him.

New York, at that time, was a boiling, seething military and political caldron. Every thing was at white heat. Social hostility between the liberty men and the tories was intense. The city was then and long had been in the hands of the British, but the grip of the lion's paw was being rapidly weakened. Liberty men were in high hopes, but still crowded and crushed, and almost forbidden to think. An armistice had been signed in Paris in January previous. Hostilities ceased in April, but matters were still uncertain. There were neither telegraphs nor steam-ships then. Information traveled slow. The evacuation of the city by the British and its occupation by Washington did not occur until November following. It was not until late in May that it was known in New York that hostilities had suspended under the armistice of January. Just then tory property in New York hung by a very slender tenure. They were getting away pell-mell, as fast as possible. Thousands left their property, glad to get away with life. They had kept the Americans under the iron heel a long time. Tables were turning now. The liberty men, long oppressed, wronged, and trampled on, were coming to the front, and feeling their rights, and rather disposed to exercise them.

Confiscation of property at the close of a war, in the rush and rattle of "general orders," is an uncomely thing at best. Swords are not made of ermine. Dr. Wakeley says that Aymar being a tory, his negro Peter "*must* be sold." Why? What was the necessity? The necessity was that Aymar, in his flight from the liberty men, should have a little more money to carry with him. Surely there was no other. He could not stay, nor could he take Peter with him. The measure of this necessity was exactly forty pounds sterling to him, but nothing to anybody else, unless somebody else chose to profit by his necessity. If the trustees had let Aymar and his negro alone, the latter would

have been free in a few days; or, if not strictly free, the property in him, now vested in Aymar, would have escheated to the State of New York, which would have been freedom practically so far as Peter was concerned.

To this it might be replied that if they had not bought him somebody else would. That is the old reply. If I did not sell whisky, somebody else would or might. Perhaps so. In this case it is perhaps enough to know that they did, and that nobody else did. They perpetuated his slavery and made money by it. Peter was in a condition to be free by the accidents and exigences of war, and the mere operation of law and his friends prolonged his bondage.

I have no arguments to make here about slavery. The fanaticism that has been put forth on that subject, North and South, first and last, would cause sober argument to hie away and blush for having fallen into bad company. I am not writing to fix wrong-doing on these trustees, either the buyers or the sellers of the poor ignorant negro who occupies a place so prominent in the foreground of the history of the introduction of Methodism into America. I am writing for the very much higher and more honorable purpose of vindicating the truth of that history, and making an effort to rescue it from what looks to me like literary and historic transgression. I know nothing of those trustees and very little of the Church whose trusts they administered, beyond what I read in the book here on my table, entitled "Lost Chapters," from the pen of Dr. Wakeley. He says the trustees were high-minded, honest, honorable, and pious Christian men. I have not disputed it. I have only written, and am now writing, what he says about them. He tells how he gets his information. He gets it from what they wrote about themselves in a consecutive, faithful, historic record forty years long, extending that far backward from the beginning of the present century.

His book has every appearance of being a faithfully compiled and honorably written account of the earliest Methodist Church in New York. If not a forgery, it is not only by far the best but in truth the only full and complete account of many of those important and interesting transactions that ever did or ever *could* exist.

The truth of history is one of the great bulwarks of human liberty and human progress. Where would we be without a knowledge of the past? The only thing valuable which we inherit from our fathers is their history—what they wrote of themselves. The world is guided and governed by the history of the past. Take away its integrity, remove or lessen the confidence we have in its fidelity, and you loosen the hinges of society and spread uncertainty over every thing around. Personal integrity and private virtue are nowhere so valuable to general society as in the preparation and preservation of history to be transmitted to posterity.

Now I do not know, nor is it hardly possible it will ever be known, who sequestered and hid away the old Methodist history so carefully and faithfully written in the old record-book of New York Methodism in or near 1799. No one person could have done it. It was a precautionary arrangement, or at least looks so. As to its having been inadvertently mislaid, as before observed, that would seem impossible, for then *that fact* would be by far the most important occurrence of those times touching this general subject. And that could not be historically suppressed without collusion. It must have required some concerted effort to prevent the loss of that important history from being known, written and talked about. Otherwise the knowledge of the loss must have entered into the history of that period and been brought down to our times. Important history cannot die a natural death. One of the greatest misfortunes that can

befall a people, community, or society is the loss of important history. What would our holy Christianity be without its history? yea, and without the integrity and faithfulness of its history? Did our Israelitish fathers suppress and mutilate the history of the Church in order to hide the sin of David, or the criminal conduct of Solomon? or to screen the guilty anywhere? How do we know of the backsliding of Peter, or of the apostasy of Judas, but by the truth and integrity of history? And is it reserved to American Methodism, almost in the nineteenth century, to squelch, secrete, and hide away important and interesting portions of its own history? It would seem so.

Look at the labors of Dr. Bangs, Dr. Stevens, and others in hunting up scraps here and there, many of them necessarily doubtful, in order to make up, the best they could, some sort of a connected and consecutive history of the New York Church prior to the year 1800. And then let it be told that this history *was written*, in the fullest, completest, and most reliable and authentic form, and that the squeamish folly of somebody caused violent hands to be laid upon it. And *this* is part of the history of New York Methodism!

The motive for such concealment is apparent. "The trustees bought a negro, and we shall be laughed at about it!" Or, "It may tend to mar the beauty of some of our intended anti-slavery speeches." Something like this must have been the motive. Nothing else seems conceivable.

But after fifty years it came to light, and by some means fell into the hands of a gentleman—a New York Methodist minister—who seems to have made an honest effort to resuscitate and perpetuate some little of the long-lost and now recovered "treasure." "O," said he, "it is a perfect treasure!" And there was rejoicing that the history of early Methodism in America and New York is found and is yet to be seen and read. And it *was* partially or some of it re-

written, compiled, reãrranged, put into convenient form, and printed in a handsome, well-bound book of six hundred pages. But this book seems to have had a poor circulation in this country. And now it is not certain, if indeed likely, the Church and the world ever will know, in any consecutive, detailed, historic form, how and under what particular train of circumstances Methodism was first introduced and propagated in America. We have abundance of historic scraps and incidents, but they are necessarily defective and incomplete. The complete history is or may be lost, and the loss is or may be irreparable. The men who knew the facts and recorded them are dead, and the grave is silent.

It was thirteen years before Dr. Wakeley found the lost chronicles that the celebrated and important General Conference of 1844 was held in that same city of New York. And it was by this Conference that Episcopal Methodism was divided into two separate governments; and the reason for this division is but too well known, as is herein before alluded to. The Northern Methodists not only could not bear the foul odor of negro slavery—be it legal, civil, or social, and no matter how great a chronological or geographical distance the foul stench came from—they could not live and worship conscientiously in fellowship with those who could.

Now let us suppose a thing that did not happen, but which certainly might have happened, and but for mere accident would have happened, viz., that Dr. Wakeley had found this history of New York Methodism a little earlier than he did, and it had been there on the floor of that General Conference with its revelations known and seen, would a man have pointed his finger southward and said *slavery*? Not a man; not a word; not a whisper! The recent rains—then recent—had barely if at all washed out the foot-prints

of Peter, the old sexton, from the door-steps of the church in which that Conference then held its deliberations. A Methodist negro woman—Peter's adopted daughter, a surviving member of his family—then lived in New York, and may have heard some of those violent anti-slavery speeches. What did she think of them? She could have shown them her father's "emancipation paper," and could have told them, as she told Dr. Wakeley, that her father "preserved it during his life-time as if more valuable to him than gold or diamonds," and that "it had been carefully preserved in the family." It is no doubt in New York to-day in the keeping of some of the descendants of Peter. Would it be amiss to suggest to some of these New York preachers that they inquire and find some of Peter's survivors and read over this "emancipation paper?" It may not be at all difficult to find it.

Now since it is certain that if the facts written and printed by Dr. Wakeley in 1858 had been known in 1844 there could have been no complaint hinted at in the General Conference of that year touching slavery in the South, does it not follow irresistibly that no division of the Church could have taken place on that ground? And then does it not follow that the Methodist Episcopal Church as contradistinguished from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is founded and exists in a mistake? I use the mildest term. I will concede that many or, if need be, most of the members of that Conference were ignorant of the facts set forth in the old book. But the old book then existed and came to light, and if suffered to utter its recorded truths would at once have corrected the great mistake of 1844. I repeat that if the abundant and indisputable facts known in 1858, at the Book-room in New York, had been known or whispered in that city in 1844, then a discussion of the question of slavery by way of complaint against the South was utterly

out of the question. Dynamite could not work more rapidly. And as to a division of the Church growing out of such questions, the division of the moon might as well be contemplated.

This stupendous movement of 1844, now so well known and so much deplored by all fair-thinking men, is the corner-stone of the large ecclesiastical fabric now known in the history of the times as the *Methodist Episcopal Church*. Those three words have a meaning now very different from what they bore prior to 1844. They represent a different ecclesiastical body from what they did. And the cause of this difference is not enviable. By the absence of important public documents, they of that Church—a few of them, I mean—overreached their Southern brethren and caused the separation. The *separation* is regretted by very few, it may well be supposed, though the cause which brought it about cannot but be regretted by all good men. Those unfortunate causes are ineffaceable, and must form a staple factor in the history of Methodism forever.

But notwithstanding the greatness and the public character of this Church action, it is by no means intended to impute the wrong to the masses composing either the ministry or the laity of that Church. This exposure of it will surprise them as much as it will us of the South. They of course knew nothing of it. They were intended, we may suppose, to be the beneficiaries; and in order that they might enjoy the benefits and prosper under the perquisites, emoluments, and advantages thereof, the matters were as carefully hidden from them as from us of the South. But those “advantages” and benefits are of a very doubtful character. Solid religious prosperity is not produced in that way. Who the workers in this matter were it is not particularly my business to ascertain. The facts concerning the dealings of the New York Church in slave property for more than thirteen years, the profits the Church made by such commerce, the

example it bequeathed to its future self, the "villainy" of such dealings, if there was any—which question I do not raise—all, all this was known in the city of New York in 1844. And not only was it known in the city, but it is a necessity to believe it was known on the floor of the Conference. It must have been well known in the Conference-room. Bishop Andrew did not know it. Bascom did not know it. Winans, Smith, Bishop Soule, Bishop Early, Lee, and that class of men, did not know it; but some of that other class of men certainly did know it.

At the time of the General Conference of 1844, persons living in New York, and who were personally knowing all about Peter's slavery, need not have been over sixty or seventy years old. And undoubtedly many more who were children during Peter's slavery must have known all about him. Peter and his wife Molly were both favorites with all the preachers and others in those early times. They kept the parsonage, most of the preachers being single men. They are much spoken of in the old book for their kindness, faithfulness, cleanliness, and fidelity in taking care of the preachers, sick and well. They were for many years practically a fixture in John Street Church. It was not quite forty-eight years from Peter's release from slavery to the General Conference of 1844. A daughter of Peter, and not a very old woman, lived in New York in 1858, having lived in the city all the while, had her father's "emancipation paper," and gave Dr. Wakeley a copy. She, with her highly prized "paper," was in New York in 1844. And were there no New York men in that Conference over fifty years old? I repeat these important facts. And none under fifty who had heard the story of Peter rehearsed forty times in their boyhood? No Methodists in New York in 1844 who had heard of Peter the slave-sexton only about fifty years before? Peter himself lived in New York City

until 1823, only twenty-one years before this Conference of 1844. Dr. Wakeley explains frequently that Peter was as well known to the New York Methodists as any other man. He and his wife Molly lived in the parsonage, took care of it, and boarded the preachers there many years. The stationed preacher lived in the parsonage, and visiting preachers always staid there. So, of course, many of the older members of that Conference were perfectly familiar with Peter's slavery. Their remembrance of it was only twenty-five years back. Peter's purchase was only sixty-one years before that Conference. And the daughter of Peter was there at that Conference.

I have not much knowledge of many of the individual members of that Conference from the North. A considerable number of them are of course well known. Among them was Tobias Spicer. He was a delegate from one of the New York Conferences, and, as I am informed, was the room-mate of John B. McFerrin, a delegate from Tennessee. Mr. Spicer was an elderly gentleman, I suppose over seventy-five, and if I am correct had then been preaching in and near New York over, or at least about, forty-five years. He was stationed at John Street in 1821, when Peter and Molly were among his Church-members. Molly died in April of that year, and the notableness of her character and death was such that the well-known Rev. Thomas Lyell, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, came in to take part with Mr. Spicer in the obsequies. Thirty-six years after that, Mr. Spicer told Dr. Wakeley: "I felt honored in attending the funeral of Molly Williams, one who had cared for Methodist preachers so long, and made them so comfortable." Peter died about two years afterward. His funeral-sermon was preached to a crowded congregation in the old John Street Church by the celebrated Dr. Phœbus, who had known him for forty years.

While Mr. Spicer is before us we will look at an interesting piece of history with which he stands connected:

"Journal of the General Conference, 1844 (page 111)—Wednesday afternoon, June 5. J. B. McFerrin offered the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That the committee appointed to take into consideration the communication of the delegates from the Southern Conferences be instructed—provided they cannot in their judgment devise a plan for an amicable adjustment of the difficulties now existing in the Church, on the subject of slavery—to devise, if possible, a constitutional plan for a mutual and friendly division of the Church.

"J. B. MCFERRIN, TOBIAS SPICER."

Look at that resolution carefully, and notice the condition of things then and there. There was Spicer with forty colleagues in the North, each one brimful of superabundant material of an *esoteric* character, which at a word would have settled all "difficulties;" would have exhibited a manly magnanimity; would have vindicated the truth of history—yea, and the truth itself, for its own sake; would have elevated the Christian morals of that Conference; would have set off apostolic Christianity better than it was done; would have forestalled O how much that is and long will be sorely regretted. And there was McFerrin with his Southern colleagues, as little dreaming of Peter's Church-chattelship as of slavery among the angels. What a contrast!

A speech that was *not* made on the floor of that Conference may be easily imagined, substantially; and because it was not made, this cloud is to rest forever on New York Methodism. Suppose some Northman had risen, and in the might and majesty of Christian truth had spoken somewhat as follows:

"Brethren, this farce has gone far enough. It must stop.

No man on this floor is more opposed to slavery than I am. I oppose it now and will not cease to do so by all fair and truthful means, but I will not use crooked or doubtful means to assist in the support of *any thing*. If the Church needs this, let the Church ~~rend~~rend into a thousand splinters, and let the heavens fall, but let truth and fair dealing rule this auspicious hour! In our efforts to drive slavery from the land, let us not heap the guilt and odium of it on our Southern brethren, with our own slave-history so near at hand! Let us be consistent." And then he would have related a little of Peter's history—a little simple truth wonderfully pertinent to the occasion.

And then what? Why, then and there that farce would have ended, and lasting honors would have crowned the brow of that man. But that man was not found. Alas that he was not!

The separation of the Church in 1844 was therefore brought about by an entire and successful suppression of the most important facts that should have governed the deliberations of that body. These facts were in the close keeping of some, presumably many, of the older members of that Conference. This is certainly one of the most remarkable things of the kind that ever happened. I will not attempt to give a name to this remarkable concealment. If the case were before a chancery court, where such things sometimes meet investigation, the books would furnish a name for it.

The action of that Conference could not possibly have been prompted by mere opposition to slavery. That cannot be supposed, for the action had no tendency whatever—could not possibly have—to restrict or lessen slavery. There are but two theories in sight that could have prompted such action by possibility—viz., opposition to slavery, and the purity of the Church.

The former could not apply in this case, for no man could suppose that any amount of punishment inflicted upon Bishop Andrew could in any way tend to lessen either the evil or the area of slavery. If he had been compelled to sell the negro, that would not help the case in the least. The motive, then, must have been to vindicate the immaculate purity of the Church. This is supposable. Say that slavery, touched in any way or to any extent, is absolutely incompatible with the Christian religion; that this is an unvarying cardinal principle, and must be vindicated at all hazards. So, now what? The what is not far off.

The bold impostor looks not more silly
When the cheat's found out.

A Church patronizing slavery; the New York branch of it born and cradled in slavery; the blood of slavery (whatever kind of blood it may really have) reeking from every garment; its slavery tolerated by its Bishops, Coke and Asbury; by Richard Whatcoat, Thomas Vasey, Freeborn Garrettson, Philip Embury, Thomas Webb, Robert Williams, Joseph Pilmoor; by Mann, Dickins, Hagerty, Morrell; by Dr. William Phœbus, and by the whole Church. The slave-sexton swept the church, lighted the candles—they used candles in those days—put the Bible and hymn-book in place, and the Bishop preached. The Church's slave fed and saddled the Bishop's horse, blacked his boots, cleaned his room, and made his fires, day after day, month after month, and year after year, for more than thirteen years; and did the same thing for every other one of the early preachers, except when they were away from New York.

And now, a few years afterward—exactly forty-seven years and seven months after, to be accurate—immaculate purity turns up. “O we are very sorry for poor old Bishop Andrew, but the solemn truth is that some twenty years

ago a gentleman in the State of Georgia owned a slave; the gentleman died and the negro did n't die, and the widow was married to Bishop Andrew. Now what can we New York and New England Methodists do? What *can* we do?"

Well, there are but three things that are absolutely endless: one is eternity, another is a circle, and the other is fanaticism.

If any one should think that I put the patronizing and the reeking too strongly, let me show him his mistake. I put nothing strongly, but write historic truth very plainly and very simply. It is the truth, not the putting, that is strong. Bishop Coke and Messrs. Whatcoat and Vasey landed in New York in November, 1784, seventeen months after the ecclesiastical enchattelment of Peter, and went right to the slave-house, where they then and ever thereafter, when in the city, made their homes; where they performed much, if not most, of their labors in America, and where they found comfortable homes. Mr. Asbury was in New York, living in the slave-house, in August, 1783, two months after the said enchattelment, and where Mr. Dickins was so faithfully and so successfully preaching. Freeborn Garrettson was occupant of the slave-house several years—first as pastor, and then as presiding elder—during which time he was, as a Southern planter would have stated it, the "over-seer" of the slave property. And substantially so of all the rest for ten or fifteen years.

Now what I mean by saying that all these men, with one consent, patronized slavery is that they thus enjoyed it; ate and slept and were cared for, sick and well, and made comfortable by it, month after month and year after year; and we hear first and last to this day not the first or slightest whisper of disapproval of it. It is said that silence gives consent; and that is a good rule. If it can be shown that it was ever disapproved, let it be shown, and I promise that

this statement shall be withdrawn more quickly and with better grace than Wakeley's book was. And if it has not been disapproved by anybody, is it unfair to rate the men of 1844 as slave-patrons? We hear much disapproval of "Southern" slavery, but I do not remember to have heard any disapproval of slavery in a non-geographical aspect.

The simple fact of commercial slavery by the Methodist Episcopal Church is of itself a fact of immense magnitude and importance. As a simple fact it has been made great and loaded with importance by the action of that Church literally a thousand times repeated, by magnifying the iniquity thereof. Thousands upon thousands of times has "slavery in all circumstances" been denounced by that Church as "the sum of all villainies." Not many General Conferences, not many Annual Conferences, not many Quarterly Conferences, for the last forty or fifty years, have failed to do themselves the honor of repeating these denunciations in every form of expression that literary genius could invent. Where is the episcopal address, where is the report on the state of the Church, where is the literary production—religious, scholastic, hortatory, or Biblical—that did not labor, and oftentimes successfully, to outvie its predecessor in linguistic refinements on those denunciations? They are not very numerous. And all this while, there, at no great distance, on every such occasion, stood the angel of exposure—though unseen by reason of strange blindness—with his gentle finger of truth pointing with unerring distinctness to those orators and denunciators, and whispering with most tremendous force of expression, "THOU ART THE MAN!" On the floor of the General Conference of 1844, on scores of occasions, the unheeded echo ought to have been heard, "*Thou art the man!*" Bishops ought to have heard the rebuke; editors ought to have seen the index, teachers should have heeded the admonition, and preachers ought to have

been startled at the silent thundering of stifled and suppressed truth, as it repeated, "THOU ART THE MAN!" The knowing ones chuckled over their secret knowledge, while their exulting thoughts might almost be interpreted to mean, "How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?" while the spirit of the old prophet might have been discerned, at no great distance in the very act of giving utterance to the mighty words, "THOU ART THE MAN!"

No historic fact, as a fact, in American history, stands higher or is emblazoned in brighter colors by Northern writers and orators than the criminality of Southern slavery. There is to-day not perhaps more than one person in twenty throughout the United States that ever heard of Northern slavery. Slavery in America, in the hands of the smart and the crafty, means Southern slavery. Although the North made it, invented it, introduced it, propagated it, and taught it as an American institution, and made it respectable, and, as Dr. Wakeley in "Lost Chapters" says, made it "religious;" and on its becoming unprofitable in the frigid regions, saddled it, morally, commercially, and, as Wakeley says, "religiously" on the South; and on getting its last dollar in their pockets, forthwith denounces it as a Southern affair altogether, and sinful beyond expression—who does not know, having read it and listened to it ten thousand times, that the immaculateness of New England and New York purity, in social morals and religious integrity, consisted mainly in their hatred of slavery "under all circumstances?"

And now to be told that New York itself, even New York Methodists, once touched slavery with the tip of its finger—nay, that they dealt in commercial slavery; and more, that the New York Methodist Church, not merely in its members but the Church officially, even "religiously," was proslavery; and more still, that the Church made Church money

out of slave "flesh and blood," and that this slave money (not less, probably, than fifteen hundred or two thousand dollars) is yet in the Church; yea, and far more than all that, that this same New York Methodist Church perpetuated and refastened the "chains of slavery" on poor Peter; the ignorant African, whom, if let alone, in a few days would have been free by operation of law—can this be told? Can New York humanity endure it? Well, *that* must be tested.

Murder *will* out, and truth *is* stranger than fiction. And it is ten thousand times more mighty. It may be throttled, stifled, downtrodden, suppressed, traduced, laughed at, but it will rise and tell its story as certainly as that the sun will rise on the succeeding morning. Would it be amiss just here, in this connection, to suggest that we look up and read again Daniel Webster's great speech on the trial and conviction of the Knapp brothers for a murder committed thirty years before? How graphically and with what force and analogies he showed that there is no place on this earth large enough, nor small enough, nor sufficiently well barred, fastened, and environed, to hide a truth of some considerable importance! The Knapps, you remember, could not keep their own secret. The coincidence in the two cases is not of my making.

Of all fanaticism, religious fanaticism is by far the most fanatical; and of all the sorts of religious fanaticism the world over, the religico-slavery fanaticism is by far the most fanatical. No enthusiasm in this role must be considered enthusiastic. Falsehood is not false; traduction does not traduce. It is disgraceful to be prudent; wisdom is not wise. Eloquence is piling up hyperboles in describing the wickedness of the South for using the inheritance they inherited from their religious neighbors. The pious falsehoods that have been uttered in this particular department of misrepresentation would be counted by millions; for every

utterance on the North side of this question in the General Conference of 1844, and every other General Conference of that Church before and since that date, and in every other Conference—annual, quarterly, or monthly—and every report on the state of the Church, or the state of any thing else, and every sermon, newspaper paragraph, or any other deliverance of that Church—verbal, written, hortatory, or declamatory—on the subject, was an averment of Church-cleanness and utter freedom from taint of, or “connection with,” the “great sin of slavery.” Was it not so intended? Was not that the meaning? Was it not expected to be so understood? But this or that man may say: “I did not know that Peter was a slave, and our New York Church was his master. I did not know that our *Church* was proslavery.” That may all be true as to the masses, but as to some of the older men it must be replied, Then you were not as well acquainted with the history of your Church as men of ordinary information are sometimes expected to be. “But you say our Church history was stolen and hid away.” Yes; but my saying so did not hide it. I said so only because it was so. You or your friends, for your supposed advantage, did the hiding. So says your history.

To write such things as I am here writing is one of the strangest and most inexplicable things that the history of mysteries unfolds. Many of the persons engaged, primarily or secondarily, in this matter of history, or were *particeps criminis*, were religious men. How far a truly religious man, of perhaps not a very high grade of religious consecration, may be blindly duped and half unconsciously led into open sinful practices, is a question I am not able to answer. Men of science tell us about monomania, and moral derangement, and such degree of obtuseness of the moral sense as that a man is not answerable, or but partially answerable, for his moral conduct. And that there is some-

thing in all this I have no doubt. I have long since, in other matters, been perfectly convinced that sometimes fair and personally truthful men, with no visible marks of crookedness about them, may have their minds and consciences so drilled in the discipline of crookedness and superstition, and so educated in contradiction and absurdity, that they do not distinguish between right and wrong in certain plain, simple matters. Look at the terrible and most revolting criminality among Roman Catholics in ages gone by, in burning men and women at the stake for reading a Bible! And why may not this spirit be engendered and grow among Methodists? Are men not likely after awhile to believe any thing and every thing they may hear preached every day for years by men in whom they are taught to confide? Is there any end to fanatical extravagance of belief and the prejudice of religious superstition when we once suffer ourselves to swing loose from the anchorage of Scripture and sound faith?

It is on ground somewhat after this sort that I can reconcile the crookedness herein exposed with the same good intentions of men professedly religious. There is far more of superstitious doing evil that good may come in the world among good sort of people than many of us are wont to suppose. Human frailty is very frail.

But so it is—my duty is discharged in a statement of the facts and such brief explanation as may be necessary to an understanding of them. To account for them is not my business. Dr. Wakeley thinks it probable that Peter was bought at the solicitation of the Church—that they prevailed on the trustees to make the purchase. This may be so. I know nothing but what he says the book discloses. But there is another important point, it seems to me, of total silence in the book that looks indicative.

Who did Molly, Peter's wife, belong to? and what be-

came of her slavery? All I am able to gather from Dr. Wakeley on this point is from page 442. Speaking of Peter's marriage with Molly, the Doctor says: "She was a native of St. Christopher's, one of the West India Islands. She was called Durham, from the name of the family with whom she came to this country." Then I infer that she was a slave, first, because I do not think there were at that period any free negroes in the West Indies—it was a rare thing in this country; secondly, because she was known by the name Durham, "the family with whom she came to this country." This custom to adopt the master's name was universal, and still is, with liberated negroes. If Molly merely "came to this country" with, or in the company of, some family of the name of Durham, she would be no more likely to wear their name than any other. If free, she had a name of her own. Durham, coming from the British West Indies, was of course a tory, and found himself in a warm place in New York in 1783. He was glad to get away, if he was fortunate enough to do so, with a whole skin. And what became of *his slave* Molly? Just precisely the same as would have been Peter's case, as before intimated, if the trustees had let him alone. The property in Molly would, in strict legality, have escheated to the State of New York, where all tory property in that State went; but really and practically it would have dissolved and ceased to exist. All Molly had to do was to take care of herself. Peter was not quite so fortunate. He fell into the hands of the Church, which cost him two hundred dollars in money, and thirteen years' slavery.

I have about finished my task. I have vindicated the truth of history in one of the important points of Methodist history in America. I hope I may be more fortunate than was my friend Wakeley in rescuing the old records from their hiding-place and bringing them to the light.

Among all the books, pamphlets, and periodical publications touching the early history of Methodism in America, and their name is legion, is there one—was there ever one—except Wakeley's "Lost Chapters" that suggests the slightest hint that the Church itself was a commercial slaveholder, or any other kind of a dealer in slave property? Was that "buying and selling" a thing of such insignificance as not to be noteworthy? Is it generally known that Freeborn Garrettson and his associates were connected with slavery? Is this a matter of indifference touching the early history of Methodism in this country? Has not Mr. Garrettson been held up everywhere as an apostle of anti-slavery? This, it now seems, is a mistake, and one that, in my judgment, ought to be corrected. I want our history set right. Has not the early Church, and particularly the New York Church, been held up most conspicuously and prominently as anti-slavery so uncompromisingly that it was deemed criminal to consider the question? This is also a mistake in history, in both its facts and its morals, and a mistake of such public importance that it ought to be corrected. I do not *charge* any thing against the Church, or any of its bishops, ministers, or people. I merely *say* and show, for the information of those who need to be informed, that the New York Church, bishops, ministers, and people, for at least thirteen years—up to late in 1796—were all patrons of slavery, in what I should regard a peculiarly offensive form, if it has any offensive forms. This practical slavery, just as offensive as anybody may choose to have it, and no more so, was as rigorous as it was frequently found in the North or the South, as I presume. It was personal, commercial, and profitable, and was participated in by all the most leading and noted American Methodists, so far as history has informed me—of the most prominent and leading men among them.

On the subject of the supposed suppression or sparse circulation of Mr. Wakeley's book, I have this to say: Somebody paid ten or fifteen thousand dollars to make it. In general appearance it is one of the most attractive books ever issued by the Book Concern, considering its plates, facsimiles, and other artistic work. Considering its matter, being in many respects the only correct history of early Methodism in this country then existing, it must, I should think, be regarded the most attractive, important, and salable book ever issued by the Book Concern. A large sale of such a book—twenty thousand, or twice or thrice that number—would be naturally looked for in no very long time. All book-men know that on the issuance of such a book there are a few men almost everywhere who order a copy by the first mail; moreover, a few copies go out to dealers everywhere. I have made diligent inquiry all over the South among book-men, private and commercial, and cannot hear of half a dozen copies. Not a book-dealer ever heard of it, except one, who had a few copies just after publication—never sold any—thinks they were soon ordered away. There were no war reasons for its non-circulation in the South for about or nearly three years after its publication. I was myself at book head-quarters at that time in the South. We never handled this book. Two of my associates, who have probably handled more Methodist books than any other two men in the South in the last thirty years, never heard of this book. The non-circulation, non-introduction, or non-selling of this book in the South, in the ordinary commercial way, may go by any name any one may choose to give it; the simple truth is, it was never commercially known in this country. It never had a circulation, nor the twentieth part of a suitable circulation in the South, such as could have been given to it. On inquiry we are informed that “‘Lost Chapters’ has long been

out of print." What took it out of print is not stated. It is certainly a rare and attractive book, and even with poor sale would not go out of print under a much longer time than this. If the first edition did not sell, then portions of it would linger on the shelves. In this case even a single copy "cannot be procured." Then the edition being clean exhausted, it will by book-men be considered anomalous that plates so elegant and expensive should not be put back on the press, even looking for a very slow sale. I should think that twenty thousand copies of Wakeley's book could be sold now, with reasonable encouragement. It is a rare book of great value, sparkling with early Methodism, written in fine style, and containing scores and hundreds of highly interesting facts and incidents to be found nowhere else. Books of that character do not go out of print under one or two hundred years, if ever; and even when not deemed advisable to go to the expense of fifty dollars or so for paper for a small edition to supply an occasional order, there are remnants of former editions. This book was intended to last. The labor of getting it up was considerable. It contains nineteen engravings, and over one hundred fac-simile autograph signatures, besides the great official seal of the Church. That such a book as this should have a glow-worm existence, and then sink back into darkness in a day, is at least anomalous. Whether our friend PETER had any thing to do in putting "Lost Chapters" "out of print," or keeping it out, I do not know. Men will speculate about such things, and why not I among the rest? And when men come to see Peter's portrait delineated and hung up in the Church, as I have endeavored to do it in this little essay, and in connection with "Lost Chapters," "long since out of print" before it had had reasonable time, or not much more than reasonable time, to get fairly into print, and looking at the probable reasons for such a meteoric existence of such

a book, men *will* speculate. Men who read this little pamphlet will likely want to read the book, at least to see if I am correct in all these statements, and the New York Book Concern cannot furnish a copy. "We cannot procure a copy," will be the reply. Did Dr. Wakeley lose ten thousand dollars by publishing his "Lost Chapters" without, as it seems to me, making an effort to put it upon the market? If so, he is a better book-writer than book-seller. And if he did not lose the ten thousand dollars (or probably more), the inference is that somebody else did, and the reason why will remain a significant question calling for solution.

A bookish friend tells me that Wakeley's book "has been frequently mentioned by reviewers of Methodist books in England." This tends to explain. Then it seems it was intended for the English, not for the American, market; and Dr. Wakeley may have made a fortune out of it after all.

But the Doctor is strangely and, as I think, unwarrantably reticent touching that old record-book. That is the book of great public interest. He says: "A singular old book, that for many years was lost, has been recently found. It contains the earliest authentic records of Methodism in this country. It is a perfect treasure. It is most valuable to the antiquarian, to the historian, and especially to the great Methodist family. *It has a denominational interest.*"

Then what right has he and his New York friends to appropriate it to their private use, and thus keep it "lost" to "the great Methodist family?" He had a right to use the information it contained, but most certainly no proprietary right to the book itself. I might want to write a book or two out of it as well as he. It is, or was, a public record, the property of Methodism, and not of any particular man or men. What else does the book contain that Wakeley does not publish? Where did Wakeley find the book, and how? In whose keeping was it? What did he do with it?

Where is it now? That old forty-year-long record of American Methodism is to-day by far the most valuable book that is or ever was in existence touching this great and important subject. And it is not enough for Dr. Wakeley to tell us that he found it, and had it, and wrote a book from it. Let me see it, and see if I do not write a book out of it, if nobody else does.

And so I have this further to say to my brethren of the Methodist Episcopal Church, touching the old record-book of old John Street Church: *We want it.* That expression might be doubly underscored if need be, but it is perhaps unnecessary. I mean, we want the book. We are satisfied with Dr. Wakeley's description of it, and his extracts from it, as far as they go; but we expect to examine the entries in it for ourselves, and make such use of them as we may think proper. At the proper time we will ask that it be sent to Nashville, and then to St. Louis, or elsewhere. We will probably keep it in Nashville, first, at our publishing head-quarters a sufficient length of time, that all may have opportunity to examine it carefully. Then we will send it to St. Louis, Baltimore, New Orleans, and other publishing centers. It will be taken good care of while in our possession, for we will not forget that we have in it only a common interest with yourselves. It shall not be sequestered, or in any way put out of sight, for our responsibility in the premises—being for the time the custodian of a great and invaluable treasure, the common property of us both, and of mankind—our obligation to produce it whenever needed, will be as great as yours is now, and as notorious as yours will be when the facts shall be well known.

Of course it is well understood that the revealments of this essay will be quite as new and quite as astounding to you Methodists of the North as to us of the South. Very few of the former now living probably ever heard of Peter

or his ecclesiastical chattelship. It will be hard for you of the present day to believe that *slavery money* is now in the Church of the ecclesiastical descendants of the old John Street worshippers. But it is there. You know in the Church suit *this fund* was not divided. We did not know of it, and of course it was not included in the division of funds. And, as an individual member and minister of the Church, South, I am not authorized to say that, now the discovery is made, you will be called upon, by bill of discovery or at all judicially, for our just *pro rata* of that *particular fund*, though a part of it is certainly ours. It would require a commissioner in chancery to ascertain the precise amount due us. And then again, as we of late years are pretty much done with slavery in our Church, I do not know that we would want it.

But the book, the book; that we want. And having your receipt for it, of course it will be forth-coming at the proper time. We esteem it as highly as you do, as expressed by Dr. Wakeley. "It contains the earliest authentic record of Methodism in this country. It is a perfect treasure." Of course it is. No human treasure is more valuable than authentic history. Religion itself would be valueless without its history. "It has a *denominational interest*." Of course it has. "What associations cluster around the cradle of Methodism in America! Old John Street Methodist Church is a hallowed place. It is embalmed in the memories and affections of thousands. There is a beauty and charm about it that age and time cannot annihilate." Wise words these of Dr. Wakeley.

And will any man say it is not about time these things were published? They are going to be published! Though sequestered and covered up for a long time, they will yet see the light! We will have the old book down South before long. The history of the introduction of Methodism

into New York, though so long delayed, is going to be published. Our brethren of the Methodist Episcopal Church will rejoice with us that this old record-book, though so long hid away, is coming to the light. It is not at all probable that any living Methodists, either North or South, have any very direct knowledge of our Church-slave-holding. Perhaps very few living persons ever heard of it. The present Book Agents at New York most likely never heard of this old historic record, although they have it. It is in the establishment somewhere, laid away on the back side of a shelf. The ingenuity, skill, and success of this masterly hiding are remarkable; but we are turning on the light as carefully and prudently as practicable. We hope to merit the thanks of all good Methodists everywhere in lighting up these "Lost Chapters." Everybody rejoices at the discovery of important historic facts, without reference to the means or causes by which they have been previously covered up, whether they be natural or artificial.

The main facts are uncovered now. We know where the old historic record is, and how to get it that it may be utilized to best advantage for mankind; and we know where Wakeley's book is, which gives us large and valuable excerpts from it. Though delayed so long and so strangely, the early history of Methodism in that part of America which was so long confined to the city of New York and the immediate vicinity, will yet be spread out before the gaze and for the advantage of mankind. Nothing important shall be hidden, sequestered, or covered up.

As soon as we get the old book, it will be carefully examined. Wakeley considered it of priceless value in 1858. Of course it is of far more value now. We will let the world know what is in it. We are not afraid of Peter or his ghost. We of the South share equally with our Northern friends in all the odium and disgrace of Peter's chat-

telship, if there was any—and of any and all other unpleasant revealments the old record may make.

Wakeley says the old book was lost in 1799, and that he recovered it 1858. But that gave to him and his friends in New York no right to “lose” it again in 1858. The old record had great value in 1799, and in 1858 was of priceless estimate, and in 1885 is of far greater worth. Now we propose to utilize it as well as we can for the general benefit of all.

In conclusion. *Oui bono?* To what good purpose? What benefit will result from all this? Why rake up these old forgotten matters and make them fresh? Will not many persons be sorely displeased at this publication? These are very proper questions, and must have fair, proper, Christian-like answers; and I reply:

First. This essay is not written in a non-fraternal spirit with my brethren of the Methodist Episcopal Church. A New Englander by immediate lineal inheritance, a New Yorker by birth, with anti-slavery principles inculcated all through childhood and youth-life; dating my earliest religious impressions among Pennsylvania Methodists, and scarcely having seen a slave until I reached the years of major manhood; and, as I humbly trust, a spirit at least somewhat reasonable of religious kindness and toleration—I might hope to steer clear of a charge of hostility or non-fraternity with my brethren of the Methodist Episcopal Church. I have many warm friends in that Communion. Moreover, having occupied public positions in my Church, during ten or fifteen years, where my duties required me to look into several matters, both North and South, extreme or even very full Southern views were, I believe, never attributed to me, though the contrary have been. And now, having served my Church—very feebly, it is true—more than the half of this present century, and being near the entrance into the

octogenarian period, I feel very mellow and kind-hearted toward all men. This pamphlet may be unpalatable; but complaint should be against its facts, not its author. I put them together and give them to the public because I believe that truth and religious justice require it.

Second. My prayerful and sober judgment dictates this publication for the simple vindication of historic truth. There is a sacredness in bare history for its own sake. Its simple truth must be preserved and handed down unsullied and unmutilated, though the heavens fall. To record actions or facts which some of us chance to approve, and fail to set down others, or stifle or expunge others because of somebody's disapproval, is a sin against the race, and must not be.

Third. The history of "the great sin of slavery" has not been fairly and impartially written. It has thus far been written by New York and Boston men, and it is not only written all on one side, but all on the wrong side. It is called *Southern slavery*, and so often has it been so defined that many, if not most, people have almost learned to believe that slavery was a purely Southern matter. This great historic error needs disabuse. African slavery for this country was made in New England and New York. It was planted, reared, and fathered there. The largest and readiest profits ever made in those Northern cities was by slave-dealing. There is where much of the seed-corn of their present wealth was found. And it was money, not philanthropy, that sent the slave South. The South never imported a slave. Northern anti-slavery meant, theoretically, morally, and practically, that there was more money in the *price* of a negro in a Southern market than in the *price* of his labor in the North. The North never emancipated a slave, nor did any other act relating to slaves or slavery that cost her a dollar in money. To saddle upon the South

both the expense and the odium of slavery is unfair and unjust. It must not be.

Fourth. The dual character of Episcopal Methodism is abnormal, anomalous, and unreasonable. The spirit of Methodism revolts at it. It bears none of the reasons for ordinary denominationalism. It has retarded the growth of Methodism greatly. Its true source is found in this essay, or rather in the facts discovered and set forth in it. If the truth of these facts then and there existing in the city of New York in 1844, and well known to some people there, had not been carefully and studiously kept from the ears of the Southern members, and from most of the Northern ones as well, not a whisper on that subject would have been directed toward Bishop Andrew or Mr. Harding, and consequently no "separation" on that ground could have been possible. And so, dualistic Episcopal Methodism grew out of a mistake. The large number of persons—perhaps nine-tenths of them—who voted for the arrest of Andrew and Harding did so on the ground and the firm belief that immaculate slave purity had always characterized the Northern wing of the Church, and that the "great sin" had always been Southern. They were misled, and voted by mistake. And if a Southern member had known these facts, a single intimation would have caused the Northern oratory to stop into profound silence as suddenly as a katydid ever stopped his evening song.

Fifth. The legal separation of the Church into two was accomplished, and finally accomplished, no matter how or why. That both Northern and Southern members were hoodwinked into the measure can never change the fact. But the hoodwinking must inevitably give both character and reputation to the duality of the Church. I say the duality of *the* Church—this Church; for nothing was ever written or voted, nothing will ever be written or spoken or

voted, that can, in its high apostolic essentials, make two Churches out of Episcopal Methodism. Episcopal Methodism may itself cease to exist, but so long as it does exist, it does and must exist in essential unity. This unity subsists under a higher law than any of General Conference making. General Conferences may direct *how* this unification shall be conducted, but cannot determine *whether* it shall subsist or be conducted.

And so, lastly, let brotherly love continue. There are many things in the womb of the future not now seen. This little episode of division will pass away, and future Methodists will improve upon the errors, the blunders, and the wrongs of the past. Fraternity itself will work far better in the long run in full daylight than under partial eclipse. Let the light be turned on full, and we will understand ourselves and each other all the better. And then God's providence will the better adjust our visual organs to the fuller and brighter light.

Let brotherly love continue. Let us understand each other well. Let the light in. Cover nothing. Give Episcopal Methodism a fair chance. It is the only form of Methodism in sight that is likely to sweep over Christendom and evangelize the Churches and Christianize the outside. It is like a man getting rich: the greatest difficulty is in the first million. It has attained that point. In the struggles of the first century, it has reached a hundred and fifty Annual Conferences. The maximum size of Annual Conferences is limited and fixed by natural necessity. And so—it will soon be seen far more plainly than it is now—the size of episcopal districts and episcopal colleges is naturally limited. We now have two. We ought now, in order to healthy working, to have at least four. In twenty-five years we will need eight, and in the incoming century twenty or twenty-five at least. And the time is not very distant when

we will need forty annual conferences and two episcopal districts and episcopal colleges in the Amazon valley. And then, look at the rest of South and Central America, the West Indies, Australia, and the great East, and everywhere. Let us grow, and divide as we grow. Not divide into different *Churches*—that is unnatural. Episcopal Methodism is essentially a unit, and may have as many divisions, each with its separate General Conference and episcopal collège, as the increase of the Church may require. And another century will witness a great fact, viz., that Episcopal Methodism has taken charge of Christendom.

THE END.



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